Two Kinds of Thought

The Buddha's Personal Account of the Path to Awakening

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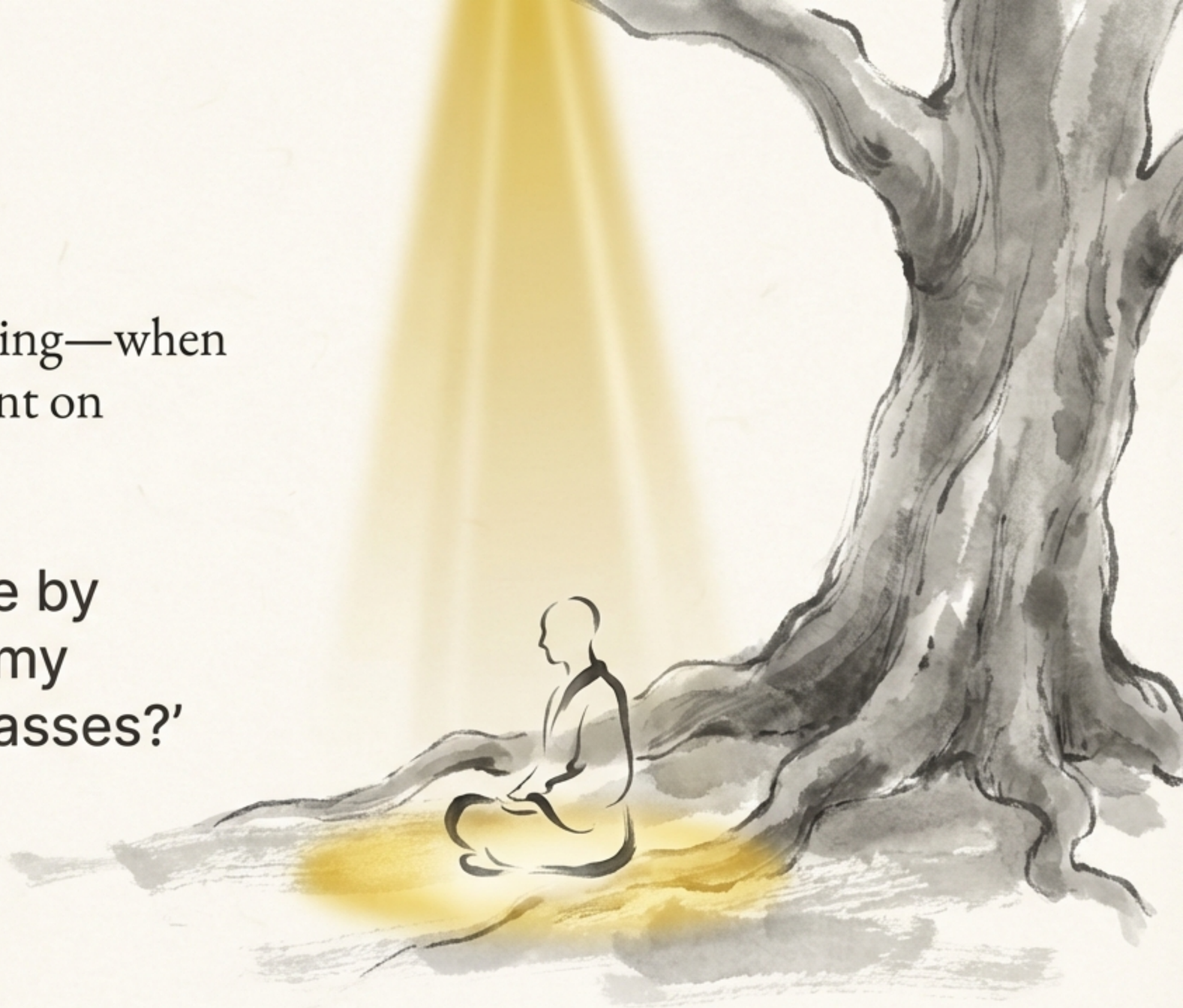
Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I thought:

> ‘Why don’t I meditate by continually dividing my thoughts into two classes?’



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The First Class: Thoughts that Hurt

I assigned these to one class:

- Sensual Thoughts
- Malicious Thoughts
- Cruel Thoughts

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I Understood the Harm

This sensual thought has arisen in me. It leads to hurting myself, hurting others, and hurting both. It blocks wisdom, it’s on the side of distress, and it doesn’t lead to extinguishment.

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Like a Cowherd Guarding the Crops

He’d tap and poke them... to keep them in check. Why? For he sees that if they wander into the crops he could be executed, imprisoned, fined, or condemned.

In the same way, I saw the drawbacks of unskillful qualities.

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The Second Class: Thoughts that Nourish

I assigned these to the second class:

- Thoughts of Renunciation
- Thoughts of Good Will
- Thoughts of Harmlessness

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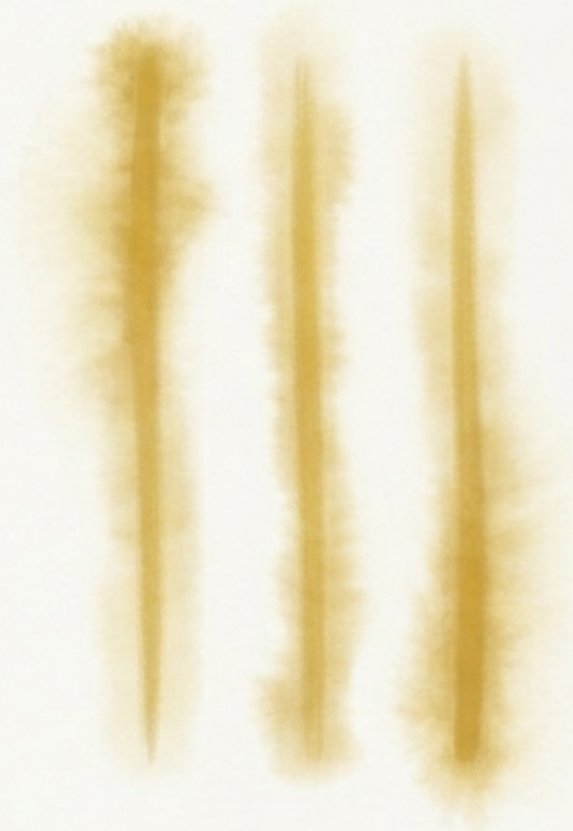
A New Challenge Arose



“If I were to keep on thinking and considering this all night and day, I see no danger... Still, thinking and considering for too long would tire my body.”

And when the body is tired, the mind is stressed. And when the mind is stressed, it’s far from immersion.

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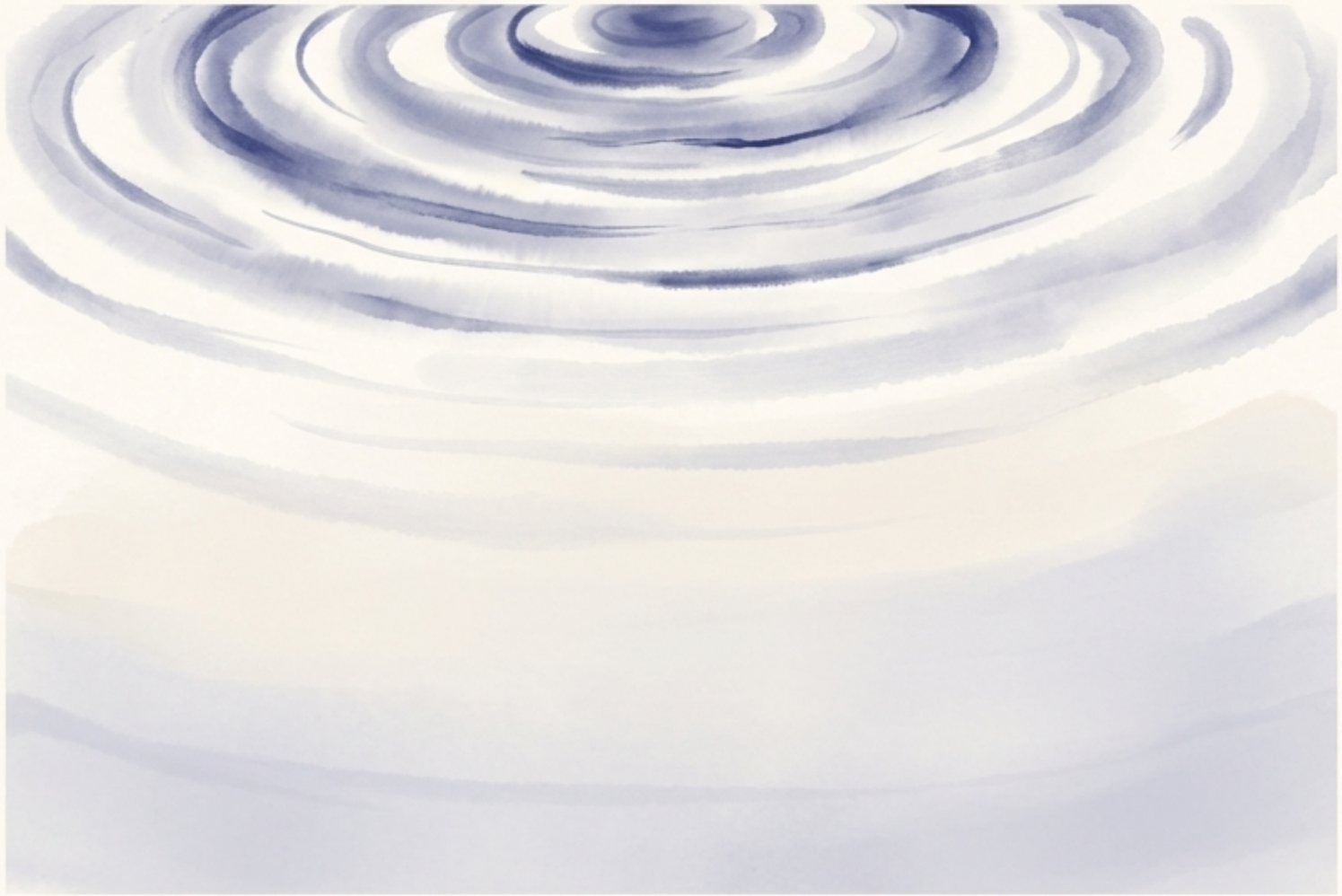
So I Stilled My Mind Internally

Stilled

Settled

Unified

Immersed



So that my mind would not be stressed.

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Like a Cowherd in the Open

"It's the last month of summer, when all the crops have been gathered... he need only be mindful that the cattle are there."

Insight. In the same way I needed only to be mindful that those things were there.

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The Mind Became Purified and Bright

First Absorption:
Rapture and bliss born of seclusion

Second Absorption:
Rapture and bliss born of immersion

Third Absorption:
Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss

Fourth Absorption:
Pure equanimity and mindfulness

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The First Knowledge: Recollection of Past Lives

When my mind had immersed... purified, bright, flawless... I extended it toward recollection of past lives. I recollected many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose;
darkness was banished and light arose.

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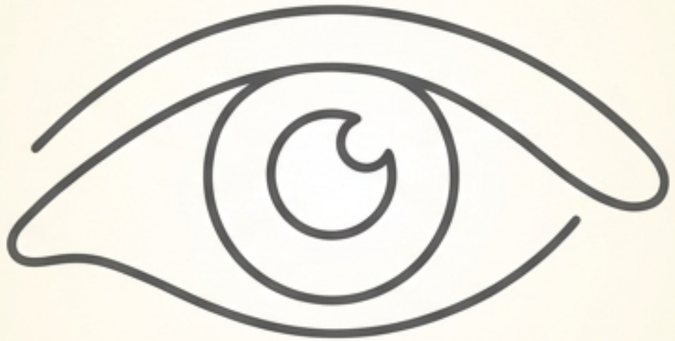
The Final Knowledges: Seeing Clearly

Second Knowledge:
I saw sentient beings passing away and being reborn...
according to their deeds.



Third Knowledge:
I truly understood: ‘This is suffering’... ‘This is the cessation of suffering.’

The Liberation:
My mind was freed...
Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed...
there is nothing further for this place.

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The Two Paths for the Herd of Deer

Term for the wrong eightfold path, leading to ruin and disaster.

Inter

Term for the noble eightfold path, leading to happiness.

Inter

NotebookLM

I Have Opened the Safe Path

‘A person who wants to help keep the herd of deer safe’ is a term for the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha.

So, mendicants, I have opened up the safe, secure path to happiness and closed off the wrong path.

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Out of sympathy, I've done what a teacher should do who wants what's best for their disciples.

Here are these roots of trees, and here are these empty huts. Practice absorption, mendicants! Don't be negligent! Don't regret it later! This is my instruction to you."

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